[English]

Closure of Mines

2135. *SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE:* Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any directions have been issued by the District Collector to close all such mines which fall under the forest area of district Satna in Madhya Pradesh ;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor ; and

(c) the reaction of the Central Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) and (b) The Hon'ble Supreme Court vide its order dated 12.12.1996 has directed all the State Governments to ensure cessation of all non-forest activities, including mining, which had been going on in forest land without the prior approval of the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. As per the information received from the State Forest Department, on the directions of the District Collector to Divisional, Forest Officer, Satna for compliance of the Hon'ble Supreme Court Orders, the Forest Department has closed down 40 such mines so far.

(c) Under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, no non-forest activity can be permitted on forest land without the prior approval of the Central Government.

[Translation]

Categories of Scheduled Castes

2136. SHRI TILAK RAJ SINGH : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh High Court has quashed the order of the State Government Dividing the Scheduled Castes into four categories;

(b) if so, the salient features of the order issued by the State Government and the broad features of the ruling given by the High Court in this regard;

(c) whether the Union Government are contemplating to take any *suo moto* action for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes in view of the ruling of the High Court;

(d) if so, the details thereof ; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA : (a) to (e) Information is being collected from the Government of Andhra Pradesh and the same will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

National Institute of Research on Jute and Allied Fibre Technology

2137. SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN :
SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Institute of Research on Jute and Allied Fibre Technology (NIRJAFT) is the pioneering Institute for technological research in jute and allied fibre; and

(b) if so, the details of major achievements made by the Institute?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Major achievements of the institute are :

1. Grading of raw jute, which has been accepted as the basis for quality evaluation of raw jute by Bureau of Indian Standards (IS:271-1975).

2. Development of grading aids such as graded jute album and jute sample boxes.

3. Upgradation of low quality barky jute by a specific fungal culture for the benefit of jute growers and jute industry at large.

4. Bacterial cultures for accelerating jute retting.

5. Chemical and microbiological degumming of ramie.

6. Development of jute ribboner machine for retting of jute in a smaller volume of water.

7. Development of small scale jute spinning plant.

8. Development of various testing and processing instruments and equipment namely, bundle strength tester, air flow fineness meter, bulk density meter, colour and lustre meter, yarn hairiness meter etc.

9. Development of different jute based/jute polypropylene blended products such as, book binding cloth, decrative fabric, union fabric, high performance jute fabric, carpets, "Caplon" blankets etc.

10. Development of technology of (a) wrap spun, (b) twin spun and (c) core spun yarn for value-added products.